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Letter dated 11 September 2002 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith the text of a statement by Russian Federation President V. V. Putin of 11 September on issues related to combating terrorism (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would take the necessary steps to have this statement circulated as an official document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Sergey **Lavrov**

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Annex to the letter dated 11 September 2002 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Statement by Russian Federation President V. V. Putin

11 September 2002

Sochi, Bocharov ruchei

Today, on 11 September, when the entire world is talking about last year's tragedy in the United States of America and the thousands of completely innocent persons who perished at that time as a result of the terrorist acts and when we here in the Russian Federation are remembering the hundreds of our compatriots who became the victims of terrorists as a result of the explosions in apartment buildings and other crimes, it is particularly appropriate and timely to analyse once again the situation with regard to maintaining national security. The Chechen Republic, where international terrorist organizations, including the not unknown Al-Qaida, have expanded their activities on a full-scale basis, has for a long time remained a source of extremism and terrorism in our country's territory.

Of course, today in Chechnya we still have very many unsolved problems in the political and social spheres. Bandits are still able to operate and strike from around the corner. But bandit groups have been dealt a very strong and considerable blow. All the infrastructures of international terrorism there have been destroyed.

The continued existence in separate parts of the world of territorial enclaves outside the control of national governments, which, owing to the most diverse circumstances, are unable or unwilling to counteract the terrorist threat is one of the reasons that complicate efforts to combat terrorism effectively.

One such place, where the situation is giving rise to particular alarm in the Russian Federation, is the Pankisi Gorge and other areas of contiguous territory along the line of the State border between Georgia and the Russian Federation. The situation in this region has, for a long period of time, been poisoning relations with a country, with whose people we are linked not only through a common history and moral values, but also a feeling of mutual affection and respect. Otherwise, hundreds of thousands of Georgians would not be living and working today in all areas of the Russian Federation practically, without exaggeration, on a permanent basis.

Beginning in 1999, when we proposed to the Georgian leaders that we should carry out joint actions to prevent fighters from Chechnya from penetrating Georgia, up to the events in recent times, the Russian Federation has patiently and persistently attempted to arrange cooperation with the official authorities in Tbilisi on issues related to combating terrorism. During this time, the assessments and approaches of our Georgian colleagues have undergone a significant transformation: from a complete and absolute denial of the presence of international terrorists in their territory to the complete and unconditional recognition of this fact.

Today, no one can deny, and we know this with absolute accuracy, and it has been confirmed by foreign information sources that those who took part in the preparation of the terrorist acts in the United States a year ago as well as those who

directly caused the explosions in the apartment buildings in the Russian Federation have also dug in in the territory of Georgia. We demand their immediate extradition. But not only have they still not extradited them to us, but they are not extraditing even the bandits who were arrested by the Georgian authorities with weapons in their hands after an unsuccessful attempt by a bandit group to infiltrate into the Russian Federation at the end of June of this year.

We have also waited patiently for the results of the so-called anti-criminal operation.

The presence in Georgian territory of hundreds of terrorists and illegal armed units made up, by the way, of nationals of the most diverse countries in the world, is not denied. The need to conduct special operations in order to restore order has been recognized. Nevertheless, there are no blockaded terrorists, no fighters that have been arrested and put on trial, and no bandits that have been extradited or even deported from Georgia. We ask a legitimate question: "Where are they?"

The answer is well known — they have been dispersed throughout other areas of Georgia along the border with the Russian Federation and are preparing to commit further crimes.

The Russian Federation firmly adheres to its international obligations and respects the sovereignty and integrity of other States, but it demands the same attitude towards itself.

If the Georgian leadership is unable to establish a security zone in the area of the Georgian-Russian border, continues to ignore United Nations Security Council resolution 1373 (2001) of 28 September 2001, and does not put an end to the bandit sorties and attacks on adjoining areas in the Russian Federation, we reserve the right to act in accordance with Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, which lays down every Member State's inalienable right of individual or collective self-defence.

In this connection, I request the Director of the Federal Border Service, the Minister of Defence and the Director of the Federal Security Service to report on the implementation of my earlier instructions to strengthen the southern borders of the Russian Federation. I ask that measures be developed and proposed for the further protection of the State border. The Ministry of Defence, together with the other power departments, is to announce proposals to develop special operations designed to eliminate bandit units if the terrorists repeat their attempts to break through into our territory.

I ask the General Staff to announce proposals on the possibility and expediency of carrying out strikes against reliably identified terrorist bases during pursuit operations.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs will be instructed to inform also the United Nations Secretary-General, the permanent members of the Security Council and our partners in the anti-terrorist coalition about our concerns and the violations by Georgia of the Security Council anti-terrorist resolutions.

I shall also ask the leaders of both houses of the Federal Assembly to conduct corresponding work through interparliamentary links, having in mind also the interparliamentary links with Georgia itself.

I very much hope that we shall be able to develop concrete joint measures to combat terrorism at the upcoming meeting with Georgian President E. A. Shevardnadze in Chişinau at the beginning of October of this year.

And one last consideration. None of this will be necessary, no measures or special operations will be needed if the Georgian leadership actually controls its own territory, carries out international obligations in combating international terrorism and prevents possible attacks by international terrorists from its territory against the territory of the Russian Federation.